

Message Text

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SUBJECT: REVIEW PANELS FOR EVALUATION REPORTS

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1. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER TO CONTINUE POST REVIEW PANEL AS NOW CONSTITUTED HAS EVOKED A WIDE RANGE OF RESPONSES HERE. THOSE PERSONNEL FAVORING THE RETENTION OF POST REVIEW PANEL CITE THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. RATED PERSONNEL ESPECIALLY FEEL THAT SOME UNRELATED, IMPARTIAL BODY AT POST OTHER THAN THE RATING AND REVIEWING OFFICERS SHOULD REVIEW OERS TO INSURE COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE INSTRUCTIONS. ALTHOUGH THEY FEEL THAT THE RATED INDIVIDUAL SHOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THIS REGARD, POST REVIEW PANEL SEEMS TO BE BEST VEHICLE FOR PERFORMING THIS FUNCTION WITHOUT CONFRONTATION SINCE RATING (AND REVIEWING) OFFICER FEEL LESS HOSTILITY AND EGO INVOLVEMENT WHEN DEALING WITH PANEL RATHER THAN WITH RATED OFFICER OVER SUGGESTED CHANGES. CONFIDENCE IN AN IMPARTIAL POST REVIEW PANEL CAN IMPART A PALPABLE SENSE OF FAIRNESS WHICH CAN LESSEN THE TENDENCY TO FILE GRIEVANCES.

B. ANY NECESSARY CORRECTIONS TO OERS CAN NOW BE MADE AT POST ELIMINATING LENGTHY TIME BETWEEN THE POST AND PER/PE VIA POUCH IF POST PANELS WERE TO BE ABOLISHED. EVEN IF PER/PE
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MADE THE CORRECTIONS WITH TELEGRAPHIC APPROVAL FROM THE POST, PROMOTION PANELS MIGHT BE NEGATIVELY INFLUENCED BY A REPORT CONTAINING DELETIONS OR OTHER CORRECTIONS.

C. IF POST PANELS WERE ABOLISHED, PER/PE'S WORKLOAD WOULD BE INCREASED SINCE OUR EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT TEN

TO TWENTY FIVE PERCENT OF THE OERS SUBMITTED TO PANEL REQUIRE SOME MODIFICATION.

2. AMONG THE REASONS CITED FOR ABOLISHMENT OF THE PANELS WERE:

A. POST REVIEW PANELS FEEL ALMOST COMPELLED BY THE VERY NATURE OF THEIR ROLE TO FIND ERRORS, SOME QUITE SUBJECTIVE, IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY THEIR EXISTENCE. ALSO, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE PANEL AND THE OFFICERS IN THE RATING PROCESS MAY ENTER INTO PANEL'S JUDGMENTS.

B. WHEN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS VIEWING AN OER IS INCREASED BEYOND THE RATING AND REVIEWING OFFICERS, INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS CAN SOMETIMES BE DRAWN RESULTING IN MORALE PROBLEMS.

C. IF PER/PE WERE TO TOTALLY ASSUME OER REVIEW FUNCTIONS, ALL REPORTS WOULD BE EXAMINED BY THE SAME PANEL AND STANDARDS UNIFORMLY APPLIED FOR ALL POSTS. IF SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENTS NEED TO BE MADE, AT LEAST THEY WILL BE MADE BY SAME TRULY DISINTERESTED PARTY FOR ALL POSTS.

3. IN FORMING REVIEW PANELS HERE EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE OBTAIN REPRESENTATIVE CROSS-SECTION OF RESPONSIBLE EMBASSY PERSONNEL. NO MAJOR PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN FORMING OUR PANEL BUT SOME SLIGHT DELAYS ARE CAUSED WHEN ATTEMPTING TO FIND A CONVENIENT TIME FOR PANEL TO MEET. THE MAJOR HINDERANCES TO TIMELY COMPLETION OF PANEL'S WORK ARE LATE REPORTS OR THE FAILURE OF RATING AND REVIEWING OFFICERS TO RESUBMIT CORRECTED REPORTS EXPEDITIOUSLY. OUR PANEL HAS PROCESSED UNCLASSIFIED

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OER'S IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME AND BY NO MEANS HAS BEEN A BOTTLENECK.

4. ANY ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF POST REVIEW PANELS SHOULD INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF THOSE FUNCTIONS NOW ASSIGNED, I.E., TECHNICAL, ADVISORY, AND JUDGMENTAL. THE TECHNICAL FUNCTION IS WELL-DEFINED AND THE EASIEST TO IMPLEMENT. FUTURE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PANELS SHOULD NOT MODIFY CURRENT GUIDELINES IN EXERCISING THIS FUNCTION. THE ADVISORY FUNCTION IS MORE SUBJECTIVE AND DEPENDS PRIMARILY UPON THE STANDARDS OF A PARTICULAR PANEL. POST FEELS THAT THE PANEL SHOULD CONFINE ITS ADVISORY OPINIONS TO MONITORING REPORTS WHICH SHOW CLEAR EVIDENCE OF HASTY OR INSUFFICIENT EFFORT. THE JUDGMENTAL FUNCTION IS TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE AND BRINGS INTO QUESTION THE ABILITY OF ANY PANEL TO JUDGE WHETHER AN OER IS TOO LENIENT OR TOO STRICT. THIS FUNCTION SHOULD BE ELIMINATED FROM THE ROLE OF THE PANEL.

5. WEIGHING ALL PROS AND CONS, HELSINKI RECOMMENDS THAT

POST REVIEW PANELS BE CONTINUED WITH THE MODIFICATIONS AS
INDICATED TO THE PANEL'S INSTRUCTIONS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT
HAVING OER'S REVIEWED AT POST HAS BEEN MAJOR FACTOR IN
LESSENING CANDOR FOUND IN OER'S IN RECENT YEARS.
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